

State of Michigan

State Senate

Senate Veterans, Military Affairs and Homeland Security

Committee Chair

Senator Margaret O'Brien

Testimony on

H.B. 4060

By

The American Legion, Department of Michigan

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May 14, 2015

Madam Chairwoman and committee members thank you for the opportunity to speak today on House Bill 4060. House Bill 4060 will require Public Universities in the state of Michigan receiving funds from the state to inform military members and veterans of the Joint Services Transcripts program and if the applicant submits a JST to the school, the school will then evaluate and provide educational credit transfer.

What is a Joint Services Transcript? The following comes from the American Council on Education:

It provides a description of military schooling and work history in civilian language. It serves as a counseling tool for academic and career counselors in advising service members and veterans. It serves as an aid in preparing resumes

and explaining Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, National Guard and Navy work experience to civilian employers. It also saves time and money by awarding academic credits, which means less tuition to pay and less time spent in the classroom.

Currently in the state of Michigan there are several Universities working with veterans and military members to order a transcript, some of these universities have been recognized for their "Military and Veteran Friendly" campuses. However, not all universities inform or evaluate the JST.

On a national level the National Executive Committee at the American Legion in October passed a resolution calling for congress and the VA to require any University or college receiving VA Educational funding to inform and evaluate Joint Services Transcripts.

In the last session of the Michigan legislature it was passed and the governor signed in to law requiring community colleges to inform and evaluate Joint Services Transcripts.

How does the transcript help our military and veterans? I will use my own personal experience. When I was discharged from the US Marine Corps I used my original GI Bill in the 1990's to go to a technical school for Microsoft Certifications. My benefit had a cap of 10,800 dollars and that was used up at that technical school. I have since returned to school and when I was at Oakland Community College they would only accept 6 credits from my evaluation. After several discussions with the faculty I decided to look into going to Walsh College in Troy, MI. They evaluated my transcripts and they gave me 36 credits for my military experience. At Walsh College for me that equates to 30,000 dollars saved.

For our returning men and women from the military it means they will be saving the tax payers money because their GI Bill will not be spending money a second time on classes they have already taken because of their service. It means the tuition assistance passed for Michigan National Guard members will go further and it means veterans who no longer have benefits do not have to spend money on classes they do not need.

It also means less time they will have to spend in school to achieve their degree.

The American Legion wishes to thank all of the colleges and universities that currently support Joint Services Transcripts, but we ask you to require those hesitant to start.

Thank you for your time and we ask for your support on House Bill 4060.

